

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): Beads of expandable vinylaromatic polymers  
~~comprising:~~ consisting of

- a) a matrix obtained by polymerizing 50-100% by weight of one or more vinylaromatic monomers and 0-50% by weight of at least one copolymerizable monomer;
- b) 1-10% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer (a), of an expanding agent englobed in the polymeric matrix,
- c) 2 ppm-2% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer (a), of an anti-lumping additive, distributed on the surface of the beads, selected from oxides of metals of groups IB and VIIIB or from mixtures consisting of oxides of metals of groups IB, IIB and VIIIB and esters of C<sub>8</sub>-C<sub>25</sub> fatty acids with the same metals.

Claim 2 (Original): The beads of expandable vinylaromatic polymers according to claim 1, having an average molecular weight Mw ranging from 50,000 to 250,000.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The beads of expandable vinylaromatic polymers according to claim 1, wherein the beads are substantially spherical with an average diameter ranging from 0.2 to 2 mm.

Claim 4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of beads of expandable vinylaromatic polymers which comprises comprising:

- polymerizing 50-100% by weight of one or more vinylaromatic monomers and 0-50% by weight of at least one co-polymerizable monomer;
- englobing an expanding agent in the polymeric matrix; and
- distributing on the surface of the beads obtained 2 ppm-2% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer, of an anti-lumping additive selected from oxides of metals of groups IB and VIIIB or from mixtures consisting of oxides of metals of groups IB, IIB and VIIIB and esters of C<sub>8</sub>-C<sub>25</sub> fatty acids with the same metals, to form the beads of the expandable vinylaromatic polymers, wherein the beads consist of
  - a) a matrix obtained by the polymerizing of the vinylaromatic monomers and the copolymerizable monomer;
  - b) 1-10% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer (a), of the expanding agent englobed in the matrix, and
  - c) 2 ppm-2% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer (a), of the anti-lumping additive, distributed on the surface of the beads.

Claim 6 (Original): The process according to claim 5, wherein the polymerization is carried out in aqueous suspension or in continuous mass.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 5, wherein the polymerization is carried out in suspension in the presence of a suspending agent, an initiating system and an expanding system.

Claim 8 (Original): The process according to claim 7, wherein the expanding system consists of liquid substances with a boiling point ranging from 10 to 100°C.

Claim 9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 5, wherein the anti-lumping additive is a powder with an average particle-size ranging from 0.1 to 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Claim 11 (New): Beads of one or more expandable or vinylaromatic polymers, comprising:

a) a polymeric matrix obtained by polymerizing a mixture comprising 50-100% by weight of one or more vinylaromatic monomers and 0-50% by weight of at least one copolymerizable monomer;

b) 1-10% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymeric matrix a), of an expanding agent englobed in the polymeric matrix; and

c) 2 ppm-2% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer matrix a), of at least one oxide of a metal selected from the group consisting of a metal of group IB and a metal of group VIIIB.

Claim 12 (New): The beads according to claim 11, wherein the expandable vinylaromatic polymers have an average molecular weight  $M_w$  of from 50,000 to 250,000.

Claim 13 (New): The beads according to claim 11, wherein the beads are substantially spherical and have an average diameter of from 0.2 to 2 mm.

Claim 14 (New): The beads according to claim 11, further comprising one or more fillers of an athermanous material in an amount of from 0.05 to 25% by weight.

Claim 15 (New): The beads according to claim 1, further comprising  
an amine-containing coating present on the surface of the bead between the surface of  
the bead and the anti-lumping additive.

Claim 16 (New): The beads according to claim 11, wherein the anti-lumping additive  
is at least one selected from the group consisting of  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$  and  $\text{CuO}$ .

Claim 17 (New): A process for preparing the beads according to claim 11,  
comprising:

polymerizing a mixture comprising from 50-100% by weight of one or more vinyl  
aromatic monomers and from 0-50% by weight of at least one copolymerizable monomer to  
form the polymeric matrix;

englobing the expanding agent in the polymeric matrix; and

distributing the anti-lumping additive on the surface of the beads.

Claim 18 (New): The process according to claim 17, further comprising:  
coating the beads with a liquid antistatic agent selected from the group consisting of  
an amine, a tertiary alkyl amine, and an ethylene oxide-propylene oxide copolymer before  
distributing the anti-lumping additive on the surface of the beads.

Claim 19 (New): The beads according to claim 15, consisting of the matrix, the  
expanding agent, the anti-lumping additive, and the anti-static agent.

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claims 1-3, 5-8, and 10-19 are active in the present application. Independent Claim 1 is amended herein to state that the beads of the expandable vinyl aromatic polymers consist of those components now recited in Claim 1. Support for the amendment is found in the paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4. Claims 4 and 9 are canceled claims. Claim 5 is amended to state that the claimed process forms beads of expandable vinyl aromatic polymers that are the same as the beads of Claim 1. Claims 11-19 are new claims. Claim 11 is a new independent claim. Support for new Claim 11 is found in original Claim 1. Support for new Claims 12-14 is found in original Claims 2-4. Support for new Claim 15 is found in the paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10. Support for new Claim 16 is found in the paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10. Support for new Claim 17 is found in the original claims and on pages 9-11. Support for new Claim 18 is found on page 9 last paragraph. Support for new Claim 19 is found on in the examples of the specification.

No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment.